



Lead Update

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Environmental Inspections

Provided by the Department of Health to Significantly Lead Poisoned Children

Based on current scientific data, and in accordance with the CDC, regulations from the Department of Health's Lead Program define "significantly lead poisoned" as: a child under 6 years of age with one confirmed (venous) blood lead level equal to or greater than 20 µg/dL; or, two lead tests that are greater than or equal to 15 µg/dL and that are at least 90 days apart but no more than 365 days apart.

Significantly lead poisoned children are systematically referred for:

- Case management services through DHS' certified lead centers,
- Environmental inspections via private inspectors through the Department of Health.

In addition, the Department of Health is responsible for the enforcement of lead hazard reduction if hazards are identified as a result of the environmental inspections.

The Department of Health intends to maintain the current definition of lead poisoning; therefore, only significantly lead poisoned children are offered an environmental inspection through the Department of Health. However, children with lower lead levels may be referred to agencies such as lead centers or the Family Outreach Program, where they will be provided with home-based lead education and referral services.

As of January 2003, the Department of Human Services certified four (4) comprehensive lead centers, which receive referrals for all significantly lead poisoned children in the state. In addition, the Department of Human Services requested that children with first-time blood lead levels of 15 to 19 µg/dL be referred to the lead centers. Lead centers may then offer an environmental inspection to Medicaid children within this group.

For additional information on the certification of lead centers and services provided to Medicaid children by the Department of Human Services, contact Sharon Kernan, RN, MPH at 401-462-3392, SharonK@gw.dhs.state.ri.us.

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Education Home Visits and Inspections Offered Beginning April 2003

Beginning in the first week of April 2003, the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program will send a letter to parents of children with a blood lead level between 10 and 14 µg/dL. The letter encourages and invites parents to schedule a home-based lead education visit offered by the Department of Health's Family Outreach Program (FOP). While the referrals will not be established systematically, it is hoped that interested parents will take advantage of this visit - free of charge - to learn more about lead poisoning and prevention. Families will be asked to call the toll free Family Health Information Line at the Department of Health, 1-800-942-7434, if they are interested in receiving a home visit. The Family Health Information Line will then connect the family with the appropriate FOP agency for the corresponding region of the state.

For additional questions about the educational home visits, contact Jodie Garnetto, at 222-4634, JodieS@doh.state.ri.us.

In this same letter to families with a child in the 10-14 µg/dL BLL group, those who reside in the City of Providence will be given the opportunity to call the City directly to receive an inspection for lead hazards in their home. In this effort, the City is eager to inspect Providence units that house young children who may be exposed to lead hazards in their environment. The City of Providence also has available funding for the removal of lead hazards, and will assist homeowners in the loan/grant application process in order to ensure that the number of lead safe homes in Providence continues to grow.

For additional questions about the City of Providence Lead Hazard Reduction Program, contact Dave Johnston, 351-4300 extension 438.

For both efforts, a tracking system is being established to assess the number of families who are taking advantage of this service.

Miscellaneous

1. In March 2002, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued the guide "Managing Elevated Blood Lead Levels Among Children: Recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention". For copies of this publication visit the CDC web site at: www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/CaseManagement/caseManage_main.htm; or call 1-888-232-6789 for a printed copy.
2. During May 2003, the Department of Health will be conducting and promoting a variety of education and outreach activities to celebrate "Lead Poisoning Prevention Month" in Rhode Island. Visits to pediatric and OB/GYN practices are planned throughout the month of May.

PLEASE NOTE: HEALTH's URL has changed from www.healthri.org to www.health.ri.gov